

Lee Quits as Asylum Head; Woman Aide Cites Abuses

Dr. Hans P. Lee, under fire since last October for brutality and mismanagement of his post as superintendent of Cleveland State Hospital for mental cases, resigned today.

His request for a transfer from his position was made at the same time Dr. Luisa Kerschbaumer, staff physician, also resigned and made startling revelations of conditions at the hospital that had forced her to leave.

Dr. Kerschbaumer, a fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and a member of the National Committee on Mental Hygiene, said Dr. Lee had pleaded with her to leave her position without disclosing conditions at State Hospital.

Among her charges were: That only four nurses were employed to care for almost 3000 mental patients; that unattended patients fought and rioted among themselves, inflicted cuts, bruises and broken limbs on one another; that there is no permanency of the staff of attendants in spite of the fact wages for that work have been increased.

Startling to the public and the medical profession was the charge of Dr. Kerschbaumer that several of the medical staff at State Hospital are not authorized to practice medicine in Ohio.

She said she had to sign death certificates in their behalf, although she had never seen the bodies of those who died.

At his own request Dr. Lee will be transferred to another position—not an administrative one—in the Welfare Department, State Welfare Director Herbert P. Mooney announced.

Mr. Mooney made public the letter in which Dr. Lee

asked to be relieved of his present position. It said in part:

“As I have come to the conclusion that I can serve the department more satisfactorily in a purely medical or psychiatric capacity, I suggest you effect my transfer to some such position as may be mutually agreeable.”

Mr. Mooney said Dr. Lee will be transferred within a month and probably will go to another state hospital, but not as superintendent.

No successor to his post has been selected, but someone in the present personnel of the department probably will be promoted to the vacancy, Mr. Mooney said.

Whether Dr. Lee's course today was suggested by state welfare officials as the easiest way out was the subject of wide speculation.

There have been several demands made that he be fired outright since The Press last October began an expose of conditions at State Hospital and an investigation was undertaken by the public affairs committee of the Cleveland Church Federation headed by Rev. Dr. D. R. Sharpe.

Also, the move might have been inspired by foreknowledge of Dr. Kerschbaumer's report. She said she believed it her duty to tell what she knew before going to St. Louis to take a psychiatric post there and to lecture at Washington University.

The Press' expose by Reporter Walter Lerch cited instances of beating of patients by brutal attendants, lack of supervision and serving of improper food to the mentally ill. Dr. Lee denied all of these charges.

Dr. Sharpe's committee, still engaged in its investigation, found affairs of the hospital improperly conducted.